

Irwin and Lois Hutchins

They met after WWII. Irwin "RED" went to work for Consumers Powers soon after his discharge using his experience in operating trucks and their winches while he drove across Africa and from France to Germany for his resume. He had also worked at Blood Brothers in Allegan, making vehicle parts.



Lois had returned from the Grand Rapids factories and was working at the Post Office. She was keeping her kids together as often as she could, like taking them horse back riding out east of Fennville. She was living with Red's brother Keith and Bee Hutchins. Her son LaVerne and daughter Arleen were still living with their grandparents out at the lake. Her daughter Jean was living with a step Aunt Edie and Uncle Frank on 46th St., north of Bloomingdale.

A long time friend of Irwin's worked at Consumers, Dutch Atkins as well as his brother Ike Hutchins. Dutch's future wife worked in the office, Ruth Bale. It wasn't long before Irwin was being touted by Dutch to ask Lois out for a date and if you don't ask her, we'll do it for you. Red did ask for a date and they married on April 19, 1946. The wedding was held out at the lake at the "Sheckler's", her parent's house. LaVerne can remember it some what. They rented the big house on the SW corner of 1st and Maple Street, behind the fire hall.

LaVerne was in the fifth grade at this time and was first to be able to move in with the new couple. He moved in just in time to be scared out of his wits. His grandfather had arranged a shivery one night and borrowed the schools big base drum and came drumming up to the front door at about 2:00 a.m.. Arleen moved in soon with a room set up for her. The couple soon met their first tragedy, head on. One Friday when Red brought his paycheck home, in cash, he laid it on the kitchen table along with the mail. After the mail was reviewed, Lois threw the pile of paper in the kitchen stove, a wood burner. Yup! The cash was gone.

They only lived here one year but LaVerne and Arleen did have fun here. There were four trees in the yard, arranged in a square. They tied a rope from tree to tree and spread blankets over the rope. These tents became the neighborhood circus. Mom did not like being so near the jail, in the back of the fire hall, plus the rent was a little high so they moved to a good sized house on Walter St., just west of Consumers. They lived there three years.

On Walter Street LaVerne was old enough to start his first job, a paper route with the morning Grand Rapids Herald. LaVerne says "I can almost remember every customer on the route." His route started with Patterson's restaurant on east, staying on the north side of Main, clear to Bushes house, then back where Marfia's dog started tagging along. The dog stayed with him every day for the total route. He always stopped at his new cousin's house, being Ike and

Helen Hutchins. The house always smelled of pee. Yours would too if you had 10 kids. ☺



Front row, Max, Marilyn, Jim with Connie, Sally and Keith. Back row, Dick, Joann, Dale and David. Max was killed by a car in front of their house when they lived on old M89 south of town. The route continued on every street in town. LaVerne always stopped at Cady's restaurant for toast which he still thinks of every time he makes toast.

LaVerne also raised rabbits like his grand-dad. He had no trouble killing them and eating them. They taste as good as chicken. This is also where his uncle bought him a bicycle. Jean was finally able to come home with us here on Walter Street. The family finally became whole. In 1950 they bought a small house behind the high school. All three kids graduated from high school from this house. They could almost wait for the bell to ring in the morning before they left for school, just like their new paw did when he lived just 3 doors west. The hill was a real fun place in the winter. The city would close the street so that kids from all parts of town could have a place to slide in the snow. One winter the water tower (located behind school parking lot) overflowed and the hill became glare ice. You could slide twice as far down the street.

Some where in time, Irwin became a member of the Masons. He and Lois both were members of the Eastern Star. They both were also on a bowling team at Douglas Lanes. LaVerne set pins there before automatic pin spotters came into being. He would get 10 cents a line for setting one alley and 25 cents a line for setting two allies at the same time, quite tricky.

There was one big thing wrong with this house; there was no way to take a bath. Only a sink and stool existed under the stairs and there was very little room to move in. In 1951 LaVerne started working at the Drug store as a soda jerk. Actually Lois got him the job as she was working there too. A favorite dish was called the "Awful Awful", where a soda glass was filled with every kind of ice cream and topping asked for.



Here is LaVerne, being a typical boy, playing war with a homemade stick gun.